

COPING WITH SUICIDE

On Sunday, May 1st a 21 year old male student completed a suicide by jumping off a building at City College Campus. The young man was a student at Mesa and City Colleges.

Student Health Services wants you to be informed about suicide. Many students feel suicidal from time to time. The stress of the semester, break up of relationships, and many other stressors may cause you or someone you know to feel overwhelmed. ***Please seek help or help someone you know if this you are feeling suicidal, or know someone who needs help. Here are some places you can seek help:***

- **Student Health Services: L-504 619-388-2774**
- **Call 1-800-273-TALK. This is the best resource to begin healing**
- **CRISIS LINE: 1-800-479-3339**



What is suicide and why does it happen?

A suicide is an act of self-harm intended to result in death. Some suicides may be seem sudden and impulsive, but most seem to be the result of a process that happens over many weeks, months, or even years. This is one reason that we refer to suicide as being completed – because it is the outcome of a process of psychological debilitation rather than a decision.

What are the needs of suicide griever?

Suicide is a traumatic loss -- sudden, unexpected, and often violent. The grief it causes is intense and prolonged. Suicide is still stigmatized. This may cause suicide griever to withdraw from seeking support. Suicide griever may feel responsible for their loss. **Those who witness the suicide or find the body may suffer post traumatic stress. Many feel anger towards the victim, themselves, or others. They may become depressed and all are at high risk of becoming suicidal.**

Ways to cope with suicidal thoughts and feelings

Remember that while it may seem as if these suicidal thoughts and feelings will never end, this is never a permanent condition. **You WILL feel better again.** In the meantime, there are some ways to help cope with your suicidal thoughts and feelings.

Things to do:

- **Talk with someone every day, preferably face to face.** Though you feel like withdrawing, ask trusted friends and acquaintances to spend time with you. Or continue to call a crisis helpline and talk about your feelings.
- **Make a safety plan.** Develop a set of steps that you can follow during a suicidal crisis. It should include contact numbers for your doctor or therapist, as well as friends and family members who will help in an emergency.
- **Make a written schedule** for yourself every day and stick to it, no matter what. Keep a regular routine as much as possible, even when your feelings seem out of control.
- **Get out in the sun** or into nature for at least 30-minutes a day.
- **Exercise** as vigorously as is safe for you. To get the most benefit, aim for 30 minutes of exercise per day. But you can start small. Three 10-minute bursts of activity can have a positive effect on mood.
- **Make time for things that bring you joy.** Even if very few things bring you pleasure at the moment, force yourself to do the things you used to enjoy.
- **Remember your personal goals.** You may have always wanted to travel to a particular place, read a specific book, own a pet, move to another place, learn a new hobby, volunteer, go back to school, or start a family. Write your personal goals down.

Things to avoid:

- **Being alone.** Solitude can make suicidal thoughts even worse. Visit a friend, or family member. If you have no one, pick up the phone and call a crisis helpline.
- **Alcohol and drugs.** Drugs and alcohol can increase depression, hamper your problem-solving ability, and can make you act impulsively.
- **Doing things that make you feel worse.** Listening to sad music, looking at certain photographs, reading old letters, or visiting a loved one's grave can all increase negative feelings.
- **Thinking about suicide and other negative thoughts.** Try not to become pre-occupied with suicidal thoughts as this can make them even stronger. Don't think and rethink negative thoughts. Find a distraction. Giving yourself a break from suicidal thoughts can help, even if it's for a short time.

5 steps to recovering from suicidal thoughts and feelings

- **Identify triggers or situations** that lead to feelings of despair or generate suicidal thoughts, such as an anniversary of a loss, alcohol, or stress from relationships. Find ways to avoid these places, people, or situations.
- **Take care of yourself.** Eat right, don't skip meals, and get plenty of sleep. Exercise is also key: it releases endorphins, relieves stress, and promotes emotional well-being.
- **Build your support network.** Surround yourself with positive influences and people who make you feel good about yourself. The more you're invested in other people and your community, the more you have to lose—which will help you stay positive and on the recovery track.
- **Develop new activities and interests.** Find new hobbies, volunteer activities, or work that gives you a sense of meaning and purpose. When you're doing things you find fulfilling, you'll feel better about yourself and feelings of despair are less likely to return.
- **Learn to deal with stress in a healthy way.** Find healthy ways to keep your stress levels in check, including exercising, meditating, using sensory strategies to relax, practicing simple breathing exercises, and challenging self-defeating thoughts.

The Role of College Students in Preventing Suicide

College represents a huge transition for most young people. Many are living away from home for the first time. Even students who commute to school achieve a new level of independence and freedom in college. However, college also eliminates some of the safety nets available to young people living at home. It is easier for a young person's problems to go unnoticed when he or she is away at college and not under the eyes of parents, old friends, and high school teachers. College also provides a new opportunity for young people to experiment with drugs or alcohol.

Why would someone want to die? Sometimes people want to die because they are suffering from a chemical imbalance that causes depression or another mental disorder—and college students may neglect to take medication prescribed for depression, hyperactivity, or other problems. They may also have a mental illness that causes them so much emotional pain and anguish, it prevents them from rationally considering other solutions to their problems. Incoming students may have particular difficulty adjusting to a new academic environment where the competition is more intense and the stakes are higher.

While you may not be able to solve these problems for a friend or classmate, you may be able to help the person find someone who can help. And the first step in doing so is recognizing the warning signs that someone may be at risk of suicide.

Recognizing the Warning Signs

College students have their own culture and language. You may know your college friends better than their own parents do. And you may be able to tell that something is wrong with one of your classmates when the professors and faculty advisors can't. You can use your insights to help your friends and classmates find help when they are having problems.

While there is no foolproof method of determining that someone is thinking of hurting him- or herself, the following signs might indicate that a young person is considering suicide:

- **A suddenly worsening school performance.** Good students who suddenly start ignoring assignments and cutting classes may have problems-including depression or drug and alcohol abuse-that can affect their health and happiness and put them at risk of suicide.
- **A fixation with death or violence.** Young adults with problems may develop an unusual interest in death or violence, expressed through poetry, essays, doodling, or artwork; an obsession with violent movies, video games, and music; or a fascination with weapons. Older adults often cannot tell a "normal" interest in violent video games or music from an obsession, whereas peers know what is more typical for this age group.
- **Unhealthy peer relationships.** Students who don't have friends, or suddenly reject their friends, may be at risk. A friend who suddenly rejects you, claiming, "You just don't understand me any more," may be having emotional problems.
- **Violent mood swings or a sudden change in personality.** Peers who become sullen, silent, and withdrawn, or angry and acting out, may have problems that can lead to suicide.
- **Indications that the student is in an abusive relationship.** Some young people may be physically or emotionally abused by a member of their family or their girlfriend or boyfriend. Signs that a person may be in an abusive relationship include unexplained bruises or other injuries that he or she refuses to discuss.
- **Signs of an eating disorder.** An eating disorder is an obvious sign that someone needs help. A dramatic change in weight that is not the result of a medically supervised diet may also indicate that something is wrong.
- **Difficulty in adjusting to gender identity.** Gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered young people have higher suicide attempt rates than their heterosexual peers. These youth may be faced with social pressures that make life very difficult.
- **Depression.** Depression is an emotional problem that increases a person's risk of suicide. The following signs indicate that someone may be depressed:
 - A sudden worsening in school performance
 - Withdrawal from friends and extracurricular activities
 - Expressions of sadness and hopelessness, or anger and rage
 - A sudden, unexplained decline in enthusiasm and energy
 - Overreaction to criticism
 - Lowered self-esteem, or feelings of guilt
 - Indecision, lack of concentration, and forgetfulness
 - Restlessness and agitation
 - Changes in eating or sleeping patterns
 - Unprovoked episodes of crying
 - Sudden neglect of appearance and hygiene
 - Seeming to feel tired all the time, for no apparent reason
 - An increase in the use of alcohol or other drugs

Some warning signs of suicide demand immediate action:

- Announcing that the person has made a plan to kill him- or herself
- Talking or writing about suicide or death
- Saying things like:
 - *I wish I were dead.*
 - *I'm going to end it all.*
 - *You will be better off without me.*
 - *What's the point of living?*
 - *Soon you won't have to worry about me.*
 - *Who cares if I'm dead, anyway?*
- Staying by themselves rather than hanging out with friends
- Expressing feelings that life is meaningless

- Giving away prized possessions
- Neglecting their appearance and hygiene
- Obtaining a weapon or other things that they could use to hurt themselves (such as prescription medications)

Again, there is no foolproof way of knowing for sure that a person is thinking of hurting him- or herself. But even if the person isn't thinking of suicide, these warning signs can mean that he or she other serious problems. By taking action, you can help that person become happier and healthier.

Helping Your Peers

If you think that any of your friends or classmates may be thinking of killing themselves, there are two important things you can do: Talk to them, and express your concern to a responsible adult.

Having someone to talk to can make a big difference. College students will often share secrets and feelings with their peers that they will not share with older adults. However, you may need to be persistent before they are willing to talk. Ask them if they are thinking about killing themselves. Talking about suicide or suicidal thoughts will not push someone to kill themselves. It is also not true that people who talk about killing themselves will not actually try it. Take any expressed intention of suicide very seriously.

You should be especially concerned if people tell you that they have made a detailed suicide plan or obtained a means of hurting themselves. If they announce that they are thinking of taking an overdose of prescription medication or jumping from a particular bridge, stay with them until they are willing to go with you and talk to a responsible adult-or until a responsible adult can be found who will come to you.

Don't pretend you have all the answers. The most important thing you can do may be to help them find help. Never promise to keep someone's intention to kill him- or herself a secret.

If you have talked with a friend or classmate and think that person is in danger, yet the person refuses to get help, **you need to talk to a responsible adult who can intervene. You should also find a responsible adult if your friend or classmate refuses to discuss the issue with you, or if you think that you don't know the person well enough to initiate a personal conversation.**

SUICIDE PREVENTION IS EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY!

[Suicide Prevention - Learn Warning Signs, Treatment Facts & More.](#)

We're Here To Help!

www.dbsalliance.org

[Suicide Prevention](#)

Get Help & Call 1-800-273 TALK National **Suicide Prevention** Hotline

www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/

[Considering Suicide? - Please call us.](#)

We're here to listen. We're here to help.

www.yourlifeyourvoice.org

[National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - With Help Comes Hope](#)

National *Suicide Prevention* Lifeline 1-800-273-TALK (8255): Suicide hotline, 24/ 7 free and confidential, nationwide network of crisis centers.

[What if Someone I Know Needs Help? - Suicide Warning Signs - Contact - Materials](#)

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[American Foundation for Suicide Prevention](#)

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